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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4884  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000720

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/09/2019

TAGS: PGOV OREP PREL ZI  
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI DISCUSSES GPA PERFORMANCE WITH CODEL  
MEEKS

REF: HARARE 707

Classified By: CDA Donald K. Petterson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) On September 2, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai updated a visiting Congressional delegation on the performance of the inclusive government since his June visit to the U.S. He began by reinforcing some of the more positive messages out of Zimbabwe, such as continued low levels of violence )- certainly compared to the widespread violence of 2008 )- and progress towards economic stabilization, but quickly transitioned to a discussion of continued political intransigence manifested in ZANU-PF's failure to fully implement last September's Global Political Agreement (GPA). He was more candid than usual in criticizing President Mugabe and appeared frustrated by the inclusive government's limited progress. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) The Codel, which also met with President Robert Mugabe (Ref) and parliamentary leaders (Septel) was led by Representative Greg Meeks (D-NY), and included Representatives Marcia Fudge (D-OH), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Jack Kingston (R-GA), and Melvin Watt (D-NC). The Charge was also present at the meeting which was held at the prime minister's offices in Harare.

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Still Stuck on Those Troublesome Issues  
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¶3. (C) Tsvangirai highlighted three categories of outstanding issues holding up the work of government: deadlocked issues, unimplemented issues, and non-compliant issues. The deadlocked issues are the appointments of

Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor Gideon Gono and Attorney General Johannes Tomana, which Mugabe argues were made under his constitutional authority, but which Tsvangirai contends violated the GPA requiring the principals to agree on all senior appointments. Unimplemented issues are those that have been agreed on by the parties, but have not been implemented by Mugabe. These include the appointments of MDC governors and the swearing in of Deputy Minister of Agriculture-designate Roy Bennett. (NOTE: Although not denying that he agreed with Tsvangirai on the appointment of MDC governors, Mugabe has recently asserted that he will not appoint MDC governors. END NOTE.) Lastly, non-compliant issues are violations of the GPA which include the politically-motivated and selective persecution of MDC MPs.

¶4. (C) While discussing the media space in Zimbabwe, Tsvangirai painted a mixed picture. Acknowledging that there had been some positive signs, he mentioned that he had been interviewed by CNN the day before. (NOTE: CNN and BBC had been banned from operating in Zimbabwe until recently. END NOTE.) But he was disappointed by the continued partisanship of the state-controlled media which defends ZANU-PF and attacks the MDC on a daily basis. Qattacks the MDC on a daily basis.

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A Less Conciliatory Tsvangirai discusses Mugabe  
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¶5. (C) Tsvangirai's comments regarding Mugabe were more forceful and candid than the conciliatory tone he had adopted

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since joining the government. In the presence of an MFA representative, he described Mugabe as a tyrant who had ignored democratic principles and become isolationist because of his belief that the West had shunned him due to his land reform program. He acknowledged Mugabe's role in independence, but said his record during the past ten years was indefensible and that he had turned against his own people; he lamented that Zimbabwe had gone from a "bread basket to a basket case." He also shared that Mugabe wants to be remembered as a liberation hero, but knows his own record.

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The Road Ahead  
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¶6. (C) While acknowledging that outstanding issues had not been resolved, Tsvangirai characterized the current political process as an "evolution" and not a "revolution." It was important to keep the eye on the ball; the ultimate goal was legitimate elections. Congressman Meeks asked whether elections would take place within the two-year time frame that had been discussed at the time of the signing of the GPA or whether they would be delayed; Tsvangirai responded that two years was a long time and he hoped Zimbabwe could get to the point of fair elections. He added that "there was no way this government could go on forever." It was his expectation that a completed constitutional process would lead to elections prior to the expiration of the current five-year presidential term in 2013. (NOTE: Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, MPs from both parties and other diplomatic contacts have suggested that the inclusive government will need more time to generate progress, reduce tensions, and build institutions. Therefore elections should not take place until 2013 as set out in the current constitution. END NOTE.)

¶7. (C) Tsvangirai described himself as being like a vulture -\* he had his prey in sight (read elections), but had to be patient. He did note that withdrawal from the GPA was a "trump" card to use if ZANU-PF became inalterably obstructive.

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No Mention of Sanctions?  
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¶18. (C) As the discussion shifted to means by which the U.S. could further support Zimbabwe, Tsvangirai accepted that full U.S. engagement would depend on progress on issues in support of democratic principles. He referred to President Obama's comments to him in June that Zimbabwe must help the U.S. to help Zimbabwe. At no point did he lobby the Codel for the repeal of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZDERA) or the lifting of targeted measures against prominent members of ZANU-PF. He said that though he had developed a close relationship and friendship with former Ambassador to Zimbabwe James McGee, whom he admired for his work in Zimbabwe, he hoped that the next American ambassador would redefine his role from one of highlighting Zimbabwe's plight, to one of promoting Zimbabwe's recovery.

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COMMENT  
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¶19. (C) Tsvangirai is obviously frustrated by Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Nevertheless, he was relaxed, in good humor, happy

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to meet with the Codel, and confident he and the MDC would ultimately prevail. In contrast with Mugabe in his meeting with the Codel (Ref), Tsvangirai was well-briefed, and articulately and deftly dealt with the issues he knew were of concern to the Codel. END COMMENT.

¶10. (SBU) Codel Meeks did not have an opportunity to clear this message before departing Harare.

PETTERSON